



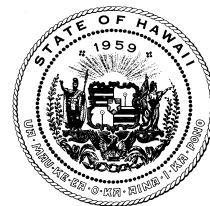
SENATOR ROZ BAKER

HAWAII STATE SENATE

District 5, South & West Maui

State Capitol, Room 220

Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813



Aloha to my friends and neighbors in the 5th Senate District.

We've reached the midpoint in the 2006 legislative session and I want to keep you up-to-date. This year, I authored or co-introduced 161 bills on a wide range of topics to address concerns in our community. As Senate Health Chair, prior to our first deadline to move bills, I conducted 4 informational briefings, 6 committee hearings and 7 joint hearings with other committees to consider 110 of the 173 bill referred to my Health Committee. We reported out 73 bills that are now before the Ways and Means, Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs or Consumer Protection and Housing Committees. I also serve on these committees: Transportation and Government Operations, Intergovernmental Affairs and vice-chair, Consumer Protection and Housing.

One issue that affects us all is the increasing use of illegal drugs especially among our youth. This serious societal problem must be addressed aggressively. In January, I convened a joint informational briefing for my Health Committee, Senate Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs Committee, and the House Committees of Finance and Judiciary to hear from the Administration and provider agencies on implementation of the Legislature's previously enacted substance abuse treatment and prevention initiatives. We focused specifically on school-based programs and continuing needs. This briefing followed work I did in the interim as Chair of the Task Force on Student Substance Abuse Assessment. Bills to implement Task Force recommendations are now working their way through the legislative process.

Our job as Legislators doesn't end once our bills become law. We must follow up to see how the programs are working and what the impact is.

In this brief report I'll highlight some of the bills I'm working on for you this session. Many ideas came from you. Some have passed through my committees. All are designed to help make Hawaii a better place. As your State Senator I do my best to ensure that the needs of our district, county and state are addressed. Your feedback is always helpful and welcomed.

Thank you for sharing your thoughts and ideas with me. I look forward to continuing to represent you at the Capitol.

Me ke aloha pumehana,

Here are some ways to reach me:

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I also invite you to check out the Legislature's website www.capitol.hawaii.gov to track bills, find hearing schedules, other info and links. My homepage is on the Senate's website at: <http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/baker.asp>

LEGISLATIVE HIGHLIGHTS

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

SB 2764 SD1 ensures the availability of *trauma care*. This bill was developed by the Senate Health Committee to ensure the continued availability of high level trauma care. It addresses a recommendation from a recent system survey conducted by the American College of Surgeons, Trauma Committee. Responding to the Legislature's request, Department of Health asked for their evaluation in light of the physician on-call "crisis" here that threatens service at our only trauma center, Queens Medical Center. Review reports on line:

<http://www.hawaii.gov/health/about/legrpts2006/hcr229hd1sd1.pdf>

<http://www.hawaii.gov/lrb/rpts06/traumacare.pdf>

SB 2764, SD1 establishes a dedicated funding source to help pay for uncompensated care, additional medical services and supports the development of additional trauma resources on the neighbor islands initially at Maui Memorial Medical Center and Hilo Hospital. Funds will come from a \$5 increase in the state's vehicle registration fee, as many trauma patients are victims of traffic accidents. Passage of this bill is important to the development of a fully integrated 24/7 emergency and trauma system statewide.

SB 218 SD2 addresses the shortage of paramedics (MICTs) on the neighbor islands. There is a great need for a consistent supply of highly trained EMS personnel, especially on the neighbor islands. Many qualified Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) want to upgrade their skills to become MICTs, but find the rigorous 18-month course daunting without financial assistance. They cannot continue to work full time. Also, EMTs on Maui have to travel to Oahu to complete the required clinical "field" work. This bill helps retain and

recruit paramedics. It establishes a stipend program for qualified EMTs to complete their MICT training.

Our Committee also recommended approval of an emergency appropriation (SB2334 SD1) to fund collective bargaining and increase fuel and supply costs for emergency medical ambulance programs statewide.

TOBACCO-FREE HAWAII

SB 2961 discourages cigarette smoking. Over 1,100 people die in Hawaii each year as a result of tobacco use. The health care and other associated costs to the State amount to more than \$525,000,000 a year.

Research shows a strong link between youth smoking and the cost of cigarettes. This measure increases the tax on cigarettes by 40 cents a pack in each of three consecutive years. The monies generated by this fee will be dedicated to the Cancer Research Center of Hawaii and smoking cessation and healthy Hawaii initiatives. By increasing the cost of cigarettes, we encourage more smokers to quit and deter young people from starting.

SB 3262 creates statewide *smoke free* indoor and workplace policies. Exposure to second hand or environmental smoke is a well documented health hazard that increases the incidence of heart disease, cancer, SIDS, asthma and other related diseases. SB 3262 establishes a statewide standard protecting residents and visitors from exposure to second hand smoke. The bill prohibits smoking in the workplace and in enclosed/partially enclosed public spaces. It's an important measure to help improve health in Hawaii. SB 3262 has overwhelming support from workers, employers and clean air lovers all across the state.

SB 2503, SD1 bans the sale of *flavored cigarettes*. Faced with diminishing market share, tobacco companies have begun new strategies to recruit new smokers. There's been an influx of new "flavored" cigarettes and children are clearly the target market. Since the ban on the use of cartoon characters to sell cigarettes, major tobacco companies have devised new ways to target children by selling cigarettes in assorted candy and exotic flavors, such as "twista lime", "chocolate mint" and "Kauai kolada". SB 2503, SD1 bans the sale of flavored cigarettes to protect the well being of our children.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE

For our schools, SB 2505, SD1 extends adolescent school-based substance abuse treatment programs in middle and intermediate schools. Now there will be programs in all public middle and high schools. SB 3273 allows certified substance abuse counselors to provide assessments under the zero tolerance policy of the DOE. SB 3275 appropriates funds to cover costs of substance abuse assessments of uninsured students who violate the DOE zero tolerance policy relating to alcohol and drugs. This bill will ensure timely assessments and treatment referrals.

In the community, SB 2132, SD1 establishes a pilot clinic to provide prenatal, delivery and postpartum care to women with a history of methamphetamine, "ice", or other substance abuse.

The purpose of SB 2364, SD1 is to prohibit health insurers from excluding coverage for injuries sustained by insured individuals as a result of intoxication from alcohol or narcotics. The bill appropriates funds for a pilot program for screening, brief intervention, referral, and treatment to address the problems of addiction.

LONG TERM CARE

SB 3274, SD1 enacts Hawaii Caregiver Tax Credit. Family caregivers provide an invaluable service to the relatives in their care. However, caregiving can be very demanding and constraining. The purpose of this measure is to encourage family caregiving by allowing a refundable tax credit to eligible caregivers who provide care for qualified care recipients.

SB 3257 continues licensing of home care agencies which is any organization that provides care services to clients in the client's home. It ensures safeguards for our often vulnerable Kupuna.

AHIHI-KINAU and MAKENA STATE PARK

This magnificent natural area reserve needs a resource plan and protection now. The Maui Ahihi-Kinau Advisory committee recommended a course of action that was adopted by the NARS Commission but no further action. SB 3264, SD 1 directs Board of Land and Natural Resources to implement the recommendations in the Ahihi-Kinau Natural Area Reserve Management Plan. It passed out of the Senate Water Land and Agriculture Committee but needs funds and a favorable vote in Ways and Means before consideration by the full Senate.

In addition, I introduced SB2462 to resolve the issue of ownership of the Makena road in the Ahihi-Kinau area. This bill directs the County of Maui to limit access on the Makena-Keoneoio government road through the Reserve. The hearing for this bill is expected to be scheduled shortly.

I also sponsored legislation to fund lifeguard services at Makena State Park. I'm hopeful these positions can be included in the budget.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

SB 3073 helps address the problem Maui County and others have in proper disposal of abandoned vehicles. This bill requires an advance refundable vehicle disposal fee for registration of motor vehicles; unclaimed fees escheat to county to be used for disposing of abandoned vehicles. It applies to any county with a population of 500,000 or less. This bill is similar to SB 3282, which I introduced.

SB 2417, SD1 makes an appropriation to eradicate and control the coqui frog throughout the state. SB 3114, SD1 appropriates funds to support Community Work Day programs.

As part of my CIP request, I'm requesting \$2.6 million to provide a permanent arterial pump-out system at Maalaea Small Boat Harbor. This project is endorsed by the Administration and is currently being designed.

HOUSING

SB 2958,SD1 implements recommendations from the interim Joint Legislative Housing and Homeless Task Force on which I served.

- Appropriates funds for homeless and transitional housing programs;
- Appropriates funds to repair vacant public housing units;
- Adjusts allocations of conveyance tax revenue for more rental housing support;
- Allows state-owned parcels to be leased for the development of self-help housing; and
- Amends the state low-income housing tax credit to include construction and rehabilitation of existing affordable housing units.

MOTOR VEHICLE INSURANCE

Continuing education in driver training is extremely valuable in refreshing a driver's knowledge of driving safety. Most states already have continuing driver education laws in place. In these states, insurance premiums have been reduced by ten to twenty per cent. SB 3278 authorizes the motor vehicle insurers to reduce premium charges for insured persons who complete a motor vehicle accident prevention course. The CPH committee passed this measure on to the full Senate for action. South Maui AARP President Tony Fisher is the driving force behind this bill.

EDUCATION

SB 3102 reduces the Student/Teacher ratio for elementary, middle and high school classes and appropriates funds for implementation. This will improve the learning environment for students.

SB 3195,SD1 Appropriates funds for a weighted student formula conversion program that provides supplementary allocations to schools adversely affected by the weighted student formula. This helps Lahainaluna High School and other Maui County schools.

SB 3103 authorizes general obligation bonds and appropriates general funds revenues for the DOE's repair and maintenance projects.

SB 3144,SD1 establishes adopt-a-school program in DOE to which corporations would make tax-deductible contributions to fund school repair and maintenance. Establishes permanent task force on corporate donations for education to advise on the program.

SB 2956,SD1 creates new school construction special fund; makes appropriations for DOE operations, repair, and maintenance; allows DOE to use certificates of participation to

finance the construction of new schools; requires new schools to meet energy-efficient standards. This bill is important to get new schools on Maui.

SB 2654,SD1 requires the DOE to upgrade the project management and data systems to effectively facilitate the construction and maintenance of the State's school facilities. Requires information to be posted on the Internet and makes an appropriation.

ENERGY SELF-SUFFICIENCY

Moving toward energy self-sufficiency is a legislative goal. SB3173 establishes an

alternative fuels portfolio standard, requires a percentage of all new motor vehicles sold in the State to be powered by alternative fuels, starting in 2008.

SB 3185 establishes a statewide energy efficiency utility and energy efficiency portfolio.

SB 2957 provides a comprehensive approach to achieving energy self-sufficiency for the State by increasing renewable energy tax credit; promotes photovoltaic systems; energy efficiency in state facilities and support for residential solar hot water systems.

GRANT IN AID REQUESTS

Providing funds to private, non-profit organizations for needed services and sometimes facilities in our community is one other way the Legislature supports community priorities. This year there are numerous requests due to our strong economic/revenue picture. Not all will be funded, unfortunately. Here are the requests submitted by Maui County non-profits.

Health Care Services for the Uninsured and facility expansion: Community Clinic of Maui - expansion, Hana Health - expansion, Molokai General Hospital - expansion. I'm also supporting operating funds subsidy for these facilities as well as a request for badly needed new vehicles for Lanai Community Hospital.

Dental Care for the uninsured and Quest patients: Oral Health Institute of the Pacific. Services and Housing for Lower Income or Frail.

Elders: Hale Mahaolu - Kihei project and personal services; Hale Makua - facility improvements.

Substance Abuse, at-risk youth, family support: Hui Malama Learning Center; Maui Youth and Family Services residential behavioral health; MEO's transitional program for inmates from MCCC; Ka Hale Pomaika'i, a recovery program on Molokai.

Culture and the Arts: MAPA - building renovation; MAAC - renovation and arts education program; Hui No'eau - new studio.

Housing, business development, community empowerment: Lokahi Pacific - mixed use project completion; MEDB - building completion, Nissei Veterans - education center; MEO - transit center.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS FOR THE 5TH SENATE DISTRICT

Here are some additional CIP's I'm hoping the Legislature would include in this year's supplemental budget:

- **Maalaea Small Boat Harbor**
Design and construction for pumpout station, electrical and sewer improvements. \$2,600,000
- **Mala Wharf**
Dredging. \$ 250,000
- **Lahainaluna High School**
Drainage engineering to alleviate water run-off. \$1,600,000
- **Lahaina Intermediate School**
Administrative/Library Building planning, design and construction. \$4,000,000
- **Lahainaluna High School Cafeteria**
Amend project language and add funds to initiate construction of new cafeteria. \$ 833,000
- **Kihei High School**
Plans, land acquisition, design, and construction. \$2,200,000
Requesting reauthorization of remainder of \$5.5M authorized in 2004 but not released. Otherwise funds will lapse on 6/30/06.
- **Maui Economic Development Board**
Complete build out of new tech-business center in Maui Research and Technology Park. \$1,000,000
- **Hale Mahaolu**
Assist completion of phase 1 of a 2-phase affordable senior citizen housing project in South Maui. \$1,150,000
- **Honoapiilani Highway**
Examining alternative realignment corridors and widening alternatives of Honoapiilani Highway from Maalaea to Launiupoko. \$1, 240,000

I am supporting current repairs and maintenance and renovation requests for Kihei and Lahaina schools proposed by the Department of Education as well as an increase in funding for facilities allotted to DOE.